

[Home](#)[About CODI](#)[About Baan Mankong](#)[Results](#)[Strategic Plans](#)[Participatory Approach](#)[Types of Development](#)[Community Architects](#)[Housing Prototypes](#)[Self-Build Network](#)[Humanitarian Relief Projects](#)[Contact](#)

The Large House Dilemma:

WHAT EXISTING LIVING AREA COULD TELL US ABOUT SQUATTERS' POLITICS



"Ms. Chamoi is very furious about the proposed changes," says a local organizer who's also acting as our guide. "She is quite well-off, you know; she owns a large trucking company and a large house." He says that most of the squatters with larger houses don't want anything to do with changes and improvement. They tend to be very individualistic and conservative.

I did a further study on this issue and found the following information:

SIAM CEMENT INDUSTRIAL TOWN, SARA BURI

Living Area per Family (Sq. Meters)	% of Families who want New Collective Housing
56 to 200	76%
200 to 400	30%
400 +	0%

The same is also true of almost any squatter site in Bangkok. Take for example another Siam Cement Lake-side squatter site in Bangkok - Bo Farang - where people with larger houses tend to be very belligerence towards new changes that would make the community more egalitarian. Such changes include wider walkways, fire egress, housing layout, larger common outdoor space etc. The urge towards the common tend to favor those with less.



We make a turn into what appears to be a residential neighborhood. It's part of an industrial estate belonging to the Siam Cement Group. This industrial estate is about an hour and a half drive from Bangkok. There are several 2-story modernist cement houses lining along the roadway. "These houses probably belongs to entry level officers; I've seen better ones than these," says our guide. "I've seen the houses of top executives and they look very different from these."

Not far from the officers' houses, however, are a commune of tin shacks squatters; they are made out of recycled wood frame; some appear so fragile they could collapse at the slightest kick of a soccer ball.



At the center of this squatter commune is a soccer field built of out of ad-hoc materials. Kids and teenagers could be seen enjoying themselves in what they have been calling "home" for more than 30 years. But for some outsiders however, this vibrant commune is seen as a slum - a slum right in the heart of an industrial city; surrounded by cement manufacturing plants and smoke-filled chimneys.

Siam Cement Group (SCG) is the largest cement company in Thailand. On its reception hall hangs a large portrait of King Rama 6. It was founded in 1913 by King Rama 6; and today its main shareholder is non other than the *Crown Property Bureau*.

In 1920s "White Cement" was discovered in this area and by 1940s, this area was the hub where the company dug out soil and other raw material to make cement. The dug-out area became a large lake - 100 million cubic meters - where squatters from all over the country came to settle around. The land area around the lake is 900 Rai.

Many of the squatter are relatives of SCG's workers who had dug out the lake, but today more and more people arrived with no relation what so ever with the SCG workforce. The lake is especially attractive for the squatters as they can raise fish and sell them in local market for extra cash. This is also true of another SCG cement lake site in Bangkok.

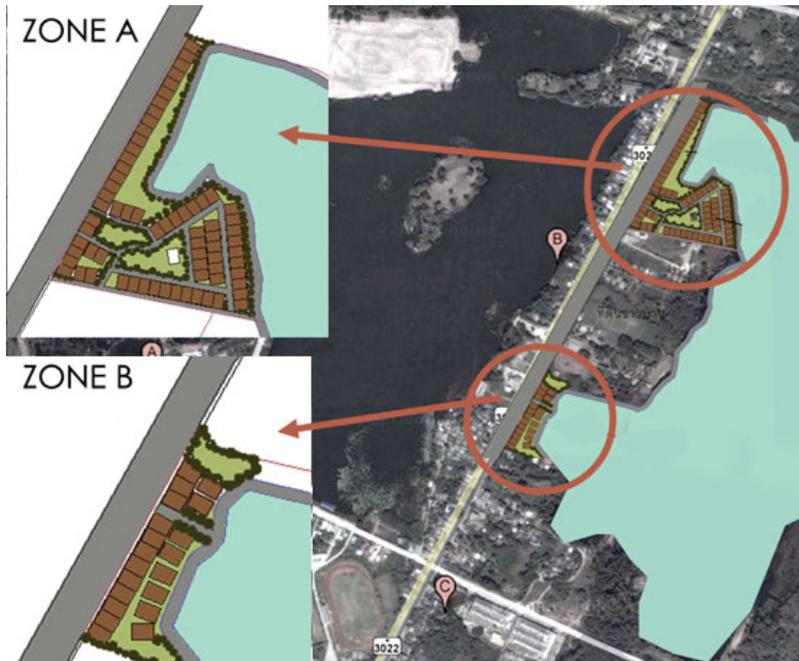


Today there are a total of 83 families scattered throughout this 144 Hectare industrial town. Their existing shacks range from 120- 400 square meters.

The *Chai Pattana Foundation* is now directly involved in working with CODI to secure an area of land for the squatter so that they could have new permanent homes. *The Chai Pattana Foundation* was founded by Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul.

CODI will be providing 5.3 million baht infrastructure and support grant to the squatter families - 50,000 per family. With management and organizing cost included, the total figure is 9 Million baht in total. In addition, the squatters will also be eligible for 7.3 mil baht loan from CODI with 4% interest rate. The municipality of Sara Buri pitched in a budget of 6 Million baht to help the squatters.

Of the total of 83 households, 76 household will be joining CODI's collective housing program here. The new designated area has 2 zones.



Zone A has 61 new households (9 rai total) while the existing 7 households still refuse to join. This include "Ms. Chamoi" who is an influential figure; she runs a local trucking

company

Zone B has 20 households

SCG is also planning to donate construction materials for the project so that the squatters could cut down on costs.

Zone A could only accommodate all the new housing if the existing families in the area join the collective housing program and are willing to relocate.

In the end, the entire Collective Housing project depends on 6 families with large houses who refuse move from their existing location. CODI and SCG and the *Chai Pattana Foundation* could do nothing until Ms. Chaimoi, the owner of a 6-wheeler trucking company, agrees to move.